

## 1940 CHRYSLER CORPORATION



*Mr. Chrysler with one of the first cars to bear his name*

*SUBMITTED BY MIKE KOSKO*

As the purple clouds of war gathered over Europe, Chrysler Corporation introduced its 1940 models, which were rather extensively changed from its 39s. Wheelbases were increased two and a half inches for Dodge, and three and a half inches for Plymouth, DeSoto, and Chrysler. Fresh styling arrived for the second year in a row, with lower, more horizontal grilles; flatter, more squared-up fenders; devindled running boards; lower ride height; and simplified exterior ornamentation.

Chryslers looked about the best, with a grille of delicate horizontal bars which were pointed in the center. Dodge's grille resembled a diamond with the side points cut off. DeSoto had a more heart-shaped front, while Plymouth had simpler horizontal bars on each side of its 1939 – style prow, Chrysler Corporation's 1940 cars had their headlights built onto the fenders (no bullets), and were round (the 39 flush headlight macelles were teardrop or squarish).

There were no significant engineering changes this year. Fluid Drive, Chrysler's innovative, somewhat – automatic transmission, was now optional to all makes, and all makes now had sealed-beam headlights. Engines changed only in detail; horsepower went up a little for Chrysler and DeSoto.



The corporation got into two-toning this year. Available on Chrysler, Dodge, and DeSoto, none of the paint combinations were very well conceived. Chrysler's contrasting color was on the greenhouse and cowl, but not the hood. Dodge contrasted the central body with everything else, which made the car look like a circus wagon. DeSoto's treatment was arguably the best, but made its cars look like taxicabs without roof lights.

I say that the 1940 Chrysler New Yorker two-door sedan, priced new at \$1230, is simply gorgeous. Would you agree? My mythical auto mechanic, Oscar Oldbomb, a plump, genial, six-foot-four curly headed fellow, said "Mike, your New Yorker would be fun to work on, a nice, big, simple engine, like my 1950 Buick".

Chrysler was gearing up for possible war. This year it continued making army trucks, and it began construction of a new tank arsenal at Warren, Michigan.

Mournfully, Walter P. Chrysler, the founder of it all, died in 1940 after a long illness. We in our car club miss you, Walter. You were one of the giants. 🍷



## **MUSEUM MILESTONES**

*By Terry Bond, Vice President  
AACA Museum, Inc.*

Your Museum is open and thriving! As you read recently in *Antique Automobile Magazine*, the new AACA Museum opened its doors to much fanfare (and in perfect weather) on the last weekend of June. Many of you by now have in fact taken the “virtual tour” from my last Rummage Box article, for real and in person. During this past Hershey week, the Museum reached another important milestone – we welcomed our 10,000th visitor! It was the talk of the town that week during the Annual Fall Meet as busloads of eager visitors took a break from their flea marketing to see what we have been talking so excitedly about for so long.



Many positive comments have been received about the Museum. From the quality of the displays and exhibits to the friendly staff and the facility itself it has impressed even the most expert car museum enthusiasts. All agree, we can indeed be proud of what has been accomplished.

Much work remains to be done however, and our fund raising efforts have not diminished. There is ample opportunity for AACA Regions and Chapters to get involved.

Whether it is as simple as getting your Region or Chapter name on one of our Paver Bricks, or taking advantage of the many “naming opportunities” available, there is room from groups of all size, and contributions at any level. Regions and Chapters often realize that having a special project helps to draw their membership together, and getting behind your new museum can easily serve that purpose. It can be as simple as setting aside part of the proceeds from a raffle, or by making a donation in the name of a deceased member. To date, only about half of our active Regions and Chapters have donated to this tremendous project, and we hope that the rest will join in supporting this effort.

It takes several things to help ensure the success of our Museum. First of course we need visitors. Hershey itself is known as a “destination” city. People come to Hershey for the wonderful attractions, and now, that includes our Museum. Aside from visitors, it also takes a successful program of special events. Yes, the Museum is available to host special events. Everything from business meetings to wedding receptions can use this unique setting. Gift shop sales are also a key component, and so far we are meeting expectations on all fronts. Lastly, it takes contributions from a wide variety of sources to ensure our financial success and there are many on-going efforts taking place to obtain educational and cultural grants from federal, state, local, and private sources. But, it is the support of our own individual members of which we are most appreciative. Volunteers are the museum are also needed, and if you are near Hershey, please consider giving some time and sharing your love of antique vehicles to help show off this great facility.

There are several other “milestones” that we plan to continue reporting progress on. Vehicle and automobilia donations continue, and in the future you can look forward to special exhibits of rare and interesting vehicles as our displays rotate. Collections of automotive artifacts are being planned along with the construction of special exhibits related to the development of the automobile and it’s many components. Automotive related exhibits including clothing, artwork, sheet music, toys and models are all in the works.

During Hershey week, members of the Museum Board met with representatives from McPhearson College to begin laying groundwork to establish an internship program for students enrolled in their automotive restoration technology degree programs. Also discussed was a plan to establish a small-scale restoration facility at the Museum. This will enable us to host special seminars and technical workshops and a “distance learning program” on various aspects of automotive restoration. Of great interest to visitors will be the chance to see restoration work in progress.

Make Hershey your destination, and come see what you have helped create! I promise –you’ll be proud!

Contact the AACA Museum at 717-566-7100 for more information.

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